

**Stars are plentiful, even superstars abound. But goddesses? In 50 years, a mere handful have earned that title!**

**L**et us first define the species. Star is okay. That means you are at the top of the heap, your name is above the film title, there's carpet and a fridge in your dressing-room, and the gossip columns have had you bedded by Warren Beatty. Superstar, on the other hand, is class. Status. You have the clout which entitles you to choose your leading man, stamp your pretty foot over the script, demand a fat percentage of your pictures, and it's likely to be at your place, not Warren's.

But if you are a screen goddess of the style that enslaves, with a smile, the likes of Richard Burton, destroys lesser actors with a glance, then ordinary superstars will kiss the hem of your see-through negligee, and Mr Warren Beatty will respectfully await your call. For you are magic, a legend, as beautiful, dangerous and remote as a Himalayan summit.

You command an entourage of fawning hand-kissers, managers, bodyguards and secretaries; your private analyst is on round-the-clock call to handle your hang-up of the week. A macho but gentle masseur will be constantly, and discreetly, in touch. Your every whim, from the erotic to the macrobiotic, will be instantly satisfied.

As you sit toying with your tequila in crushed ice wondering what new, exquisite mischief you can inflict on an ex-husband or perspiring studio mogul, millions in all currencies are being shovelled into your private vaults. As a goddess you possess that miracle ingredient the awe-struck studios call "bankability". This means that whatever movie you touch — be it a classic or cheap junk — turns to gold.

If the goddess runs to form she's an imperious man-eater as provocative as they come, with a sexual resonance that makes the flesh on the screen seem real enough to touch. And if there's a hint of scandal to the lady — that puts her in the gilt-edged class.

Who are they, then, these golden goddesses, these serene-to-sexual highnesses who have queened it magically, and sometimes scandalously, through the past 50 years? We can dis-



Bo Derek may be a great pin-up, but she does not yet qualify as a screen "goddess". LEFT: Possibly the last of the authentic goddesses, incredible Elizabeth Taylor. BELOW: Jane Russell — of the banned bosom!



## 50 YEARS OF

miss instantly the small-fry, like the starlet whom Bette Davis described witheringly as "the original good time that was had by all." And there were many stars who were short on the basic essential of the goddess class — durability.

Norma Shearer kept smiling through tears; Olivia de Havilland was regal, but dull. Hedy Lamarr was a nude sensation in "Ecstasy" but boring with clothes on. Veronica Lake had a long swathe of hair obscuring one eye. But a one-eyed actress of limited talent is hardly goddess material. Carroll "Baby Doll" Baker sucked her thumb and Doris Day lived next door. Esther Williams was great when wet but towelled herself into oblivion. Katie Hepburn wore trousers, Bette Davis was your friendly neighbourhood witch.

Brigitte Bardot showed great potential when she was first discovered on a Cannes beach. But no goddess I have known has ever gone topless into eternity. Now an eyelash off 50, she lives with her animals in St Tropez, a goddess manqué, famous for that one bare-faced-to-her-ankles film "And God Created Woman".

The first, and the archetypal, goddess of the world screen was Jean Harlow. A platinum blonde with a great flair for looking half naked with clothes







Legendary Gloria Swanson.  
RIGHT: Swiss star, Ursula  
Andress. FAR RIGHT: The  
magnificent Sophia Loren.  
BELOW: The Forces' pin-up  
of the '40s, Betty Grable.



# GOLDEN GODDESSES



on, she was the most devastating goddess of her era, dying tragically at the age of 26.

Yet, in the brief period this sleek creature with the pencilled eyebrows and pug nose held sway, she stole the headlines, the limelight, and not a few men from under the noses of less sexually-aggressive opposition. And she orchestrated her private life to match her public image. On screen she was the "tart's tart", the barnyard morals shrugged aside as she laughed all the way to the bedroom.

Discovered, and so on, by Howard Hughes, he put her in "Hell's Angels" (1930), a film spectacular about American fliers in World War I. But it was later films like "Bombshell", "Suzy" and "The Girl from Missouri" which revealed Harlow at her best — impudent, sexy, irresistible. She made "Red Dust" with Clark Gable, celebrating the event by having an affair with him. She died in 1937, halfway through her last film, "Saratoga".

We move from the "tart's tart" to the goddess's goddess. Still, miraculously, a legend in her 80s — in fact, right up until her death this year — Gloria Swanson was a world star long before sound came to the silent screen. Haughty, disdainful, all eyelashes and piranha-toothed smile, she walked all

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



# 50 YEARS OF GOLDEN GODDESSES

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

over her leading men. Her role as a malevolent over-the-hill movie star in "Sunset Boulevard" is still regarded as the best screen portrayal of a man-eater for 50 years.

Married six times, La Swanson demonstrated that a goddess's husband shouldn't expect to be around forever.

Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich are upper-crust goddesses who, at 77 and 81 respectively, can look back on their regal years with pride.

With Garbo it was all in her face. In close-up, those classic, chiselled features deployed a beauty of extraordinary intensity. The heavy eyelids and those mile-long lashes dominated the masterpiece. Garbo was no sex symbol. The body was long and lithe, constructed more for chasing butterflies than bronzed lifeguards. But every leading actor in the world would have paid to have had this goddess as his co-star.

Some goddesses believed in their own legend. Others, like Marlene Dietrich, saw it all as monumental hocus-pocus, good for the laughs and the fortunes that came with it. A husky-voiced Berliner purveying a kind of languorous amorality, Dietrich was sold as "the blonde Venus" with the most fabulous legs in the world.

The film that catapulted her into instant stardom was "The Blue Angel" in which, as a tawdry ballad singer in a nightclub, she fractured triumphantly those numbers "Falling in Love Again" and "They Call Me Wicked Lola".

Rita Hayworth, the sublime Love Goddess of the '40s, was raised on the whole idea of the Hollywood "Dream Factory". Today, ravaged by illness and the fracas of five marriages, she is a very stricken goddess indeed.

Born Margarita Carmen Cansino on October 17, 1918, of a Spanish father and Irish mother, Rita's picture was emblazoned on America's first atom bomb. It was an explosive curtain-raiser to films such as "Gilda", "Cover Girl" and "Pal Joey".

Her attack was totally sensual, dominated by the thick reddish hair that fell around a fine oval face, wide mocking eyes and full-lipped smile. She was dubbed the "Goddess of Love", which brought her Frank Sinatra as a co-star, and Prince Aly Khan and Orson Welles as two of her five husbands.

Marilyn Monroe — who could deny her a canvas-backed chair among the gods? She was, by any standard, the most desirable goddess of them all. Innocently body-conscious — it was delicious enough to absorb her and us — she captivated the world with that sub-



ABOVE: Two "evergreens", Marlene Dietrich and Rita Hayworth. RIGHT: Top cover girl Raquel Welch. FAR RIGHT: Marilyn Monroe — sexy, talented.

lime face, the soft, deceptively-coy voice, the sudden shriek of laughter.

The sex she purveyed in her screen roles — no less than was offered in her private life — was never gamey. It was as sweet, natural and overflowing as a burst peach. She had talent, too, which the public recognized far more than the studios who exploited her. Her private life had all the turbulent ingredients typical of a Hollywood goddess.

She was born illegitimate, crashed her marital gears on famous men (Joe di Maggio and Arthur Miller); she could behave like merry hell on the film set, tangling with no less a co-star than Lord Larry Olivier; and her affairs are said to have included a famous Kennedy or two. Yet she redeemed it all. From first to last she was an angel of sex, displaying her formidable goodies with joyful generosity to Whomever It May Concern. And it concerned many, promiscuity acquiring a gentler meaning as applied to this Lady Bountiful.

We will remember her, sure, for "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "Some Like it Hot". But goddesses outlive their movies. And the legend of Marilyn will outlive them all.

A strictly torso-oriented star who attacked briefly from the front was Ursula Andress. Swiss-made with fine movement, she was the sturdy, dripping blonde who emerged out of the sea in "Dr No". That spectacular debut was never equalled in her later epics like "She (Who Must Be Obeyed)" and the frenetic disaster "Casino Royale".

She should worry. At 45, with one divorce and a string of jet-setting escorts to her credit, she lives in goddess-like splendour, given to using crushed strawberry and champagne face-packs

on her still arresting features. She was once married to actor John Derek. This moody extrovert, self-styled as "an abrasive, opinionated weirdo", likes his women "to recognize that I am God."

But will that other "creation" he married, Bo Derek, go the same way of all his previous flesh?

Admittedly, that shot of her prone on the beach in "10", prodding the visibly smitten Dudley Moore with a painted toe, was the ultimate in surfside eroticism. Tumbling around in bed with him to the tune of Ravel's "Bolero" added useful ballast to "God's" precious cargo. But Bo Derek, bare, braided and bronzed — a goddess?

Unquestionably she is the world's most relished pin-up. But how different from the male-chauvinist pin-ups of the '40s — that famous shot of Betty Grable looking cutely over her shoulder, turning a satin-clad bottom to the servicemen of World War II.

Betty Grable possessed, arguably, the best legs in Hollywood, a blonde, bouncy confection of a movie star in an age turned on by 15-denier stockings with black seams. If her baby blue eyes rarely registered more than two expressions — like null and void — nobody cared. Certainly not the Battle of Britain pilots who never failed to observe the ritual of patting that Grable bottom before roaring up into the skies.

No doubt they'd have observed the same routine (though with a minor anatomical switch) in the case of Jane Russell whose film "The Outlaw" became a world-wide controversy. It was the first time a bosom had got itself banned in several countries.

Much later Raquel Welch also gave a fair display of her pectoral priorities. The long chestnut hair, flared nostrils and her habit of baring her teeth like





an Amazon taunting her mate, made her ideal material for "One Million Years BC" with which she grunted her way to stardom.

If a goddess were measured by the number of magazine covers she adorned, then Raquel Welch is reams ahead of her rivals. The girl who faithfully "oinked" in the early prehistoric rubbish last year brilliantly made the transition to becoming a Broadway star. Her name, I suspect, is being pencilled in for posterity.

**A**nd then there is Sophia Loren. The troubled scenario of her life, let alone the raw, Neapolitan magnificence that began it all, is classic material for a goddess Italian-style. Born illegitimate, raised in war-ravaged Naples, discovered in a beauty contest, then on to life with Ponti in a Roman palace.

Sophia, about whom I wrote a book and ended a friendship, is an extraordinary woman who just happens to be an actress. To embalm her in the all-purpose wrapping called "superstar" is to ignore the charisma she radiates off the screen, too.

She is rightly acclaimed as an international star, gliding through her middle years with a mixture of style and native shrewdness. She overcame hunger and the impossible surname Scicolone; stepped over the wartime debris of Naples and became a Hollywood "great". The scandal over her love affair with Carlo Ponti enhanced rather than damaged her career. But then, as Ingrid Bergman had proved years earlier, notoriety is grist to the Hollywood mill.

If the Loren-Ponti episode shocked the Roman Establishment, Bergman's steamy affair with Roberto Rossellini

outraged the Mothers of America. The cool, sophisticated Miss Bergman responded with that crooked smile of hers and went on to act most of the world's other goddesses off the screen, winning three Oscars.

It was the role of Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind" which re-fashioned the queen of the British stage, Vivien Leigh, into a screen goddess. Those mocking, flirtatious eyes, contrasting with the deceptively English rose persona, enslaved a Hollywood already awe-struck by Olivier, the man she married.

Small in stature but with a tongue that could double for an asp's, she concealed a raging, tormented soul behind the cool-eyed self-assurance.

She was always in delicate health. The more she suffered the more she drank. Finally she spiralled to catastrophe and died of TB.

Then there was Joan Crawford, whose square shoulders and fried-egg eyes dominated the movies of her time. Hard-edged, bitchy, she was best as the suffering wife; torment swaddled in mink. She made scores of films, winning an Oscar for "Mildred Pierce" and fine reviews for "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?"

Which leaves the one goddess who has stayed the course, survived seven marriages (two helpings of Richard Burton); two brushes with death; lived through more scandal, sensations and bad-mouthing in high places than all the other doomed goddesses put together.

Add beauty, controversy, talent — and there's no denying that Elizabeth Taylor emerges as the ultimate, maybe the last authentic goddess of them all. Still a very handsome creature at 50, this accident-prone veteran of long-forgotten battles and stupefying extravagances did it all, said it all.

She owned the best diamonds, the choicest husbands, made 40 films, raised vaunting sexuality to a fine art. And in case we thought this Cleopatra had done it all on her bosoms alone, she won two Oscars with "Butterfield 8" and "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Her power lies in miraculous resilience to disaster. What toppled other goddesses into oblivion brought out the fighter in Elizabeth Taylor.

Meanwhile, after Liz — who? Will Brooke Shields, for example, parlay her Lolita-like sensuality into the durable substance of a goddess?

Once, in a cinema in New York showing a Garbo film, a man in the audience rose with arms outstretched, walked spellbound down the aisle and straight through the screen. There — Raquel, Bo, Brooke and whoever — was a true goddess!

— DONALD ZEC